

• *RECORDS* • OF •

• WILLIAM • M • HUNT •

• H • C • ANGELL •













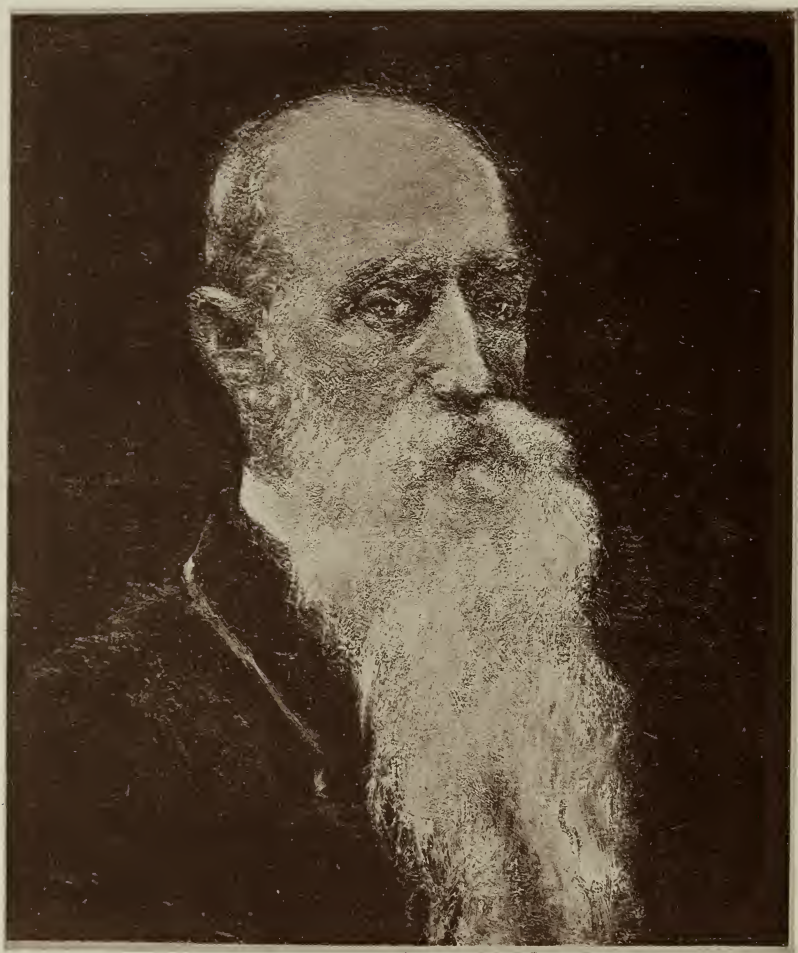
RECORDS OF WILLIAM M. HUNT.





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RECORDS  
OF  
WILLIAM M. HUNT

BY  
HENRY C. ANGELL.

ILLUSTRATED.



BOSTON:  
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY.  
1881.

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

[Heliotyped from Mr. Hunt's originals.]

PORTRAIT OF MR. HUNT (his last painting) . . . . .	<i>Facing title-page</i>
ANAHITA . . . . .	<i>Facing page vii</i>
THE DISCOVERER . . . . .	<i>Facing page viii</i>
SKETCH IN CHARCOAL, No. 1 . . . .	<i>Facing page 7</i>
SKETCH IN CHARCOAL, No. 2 . . . .	<i>Facing page 9</i>
SKETCH IN CHARCOAL, No. 4 . . . .	<i>Facing page 11</i>
FAC-SIMILE OF HANDWRITING . . . .	<i>Facing page 23</i>
THE ORIGINAL SKETCH FOR THE PIC- TURE CALLED "SPRING CHICKENS,"	<i>Facing page 55</i>
"SPRING CHICKENS" AS IT WAS AFTER- WARDS PAINTED IN OIL . . . . .	<i>Facing page 57</i>









## INTRODUCTION.

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THE subject of these records, Mr. William M. Hunt, was the first American artist of his time, and in some important respects the most distinguished that our country has produced. His versatility was especially remarkable, and in largeness of style and vigor he has had no equal among his countrymen.

Though confining himself to no special branch of his profession, his life was devoted mainly to portrait painting. Some of his best-known works of this kind are the portraits of Chief Justice Shaw, Gov. Andrew, Gen. Dix, Mr. Evarts, Mr. Sumner, and Mrs. Charles Francis Adams.

Other well-known paintings are those of the Prodigal Son, Fortune Teller, Marguerite, Hurdy-gurdy Boy ; and of later years,

The Bugle Call, The Drummer Boy, Boy with the Violin, and The Bathers.

During the last years of his life he became greatly interested in landscape painting, finding it a congenial relaxation from the severe discipline of his winter occupation. Some of his finest landscapes are varied scenes on Charles River, the picture called Spring Chickens, and others done at Easton, Gloucester Harbor, and several large views of Niagara Falls and the Rapids.

But the crowning achievement of Mr. Hunt's life is his great work at Albany.

In the year 1878 he accepted an invitation to paint two large pictures in oil upon the walls of the Assembly Chamber in the new State House at Albany, N.Y. This magnificent room, one hundred and forty feet in length by eighty-four in width, is elaborately decorated in red, blue, and gold, and recalls in style and gorgeous effects the interior of the Alhambra at Granada. The chamber at this time was not entirely finished; and it was understood that this brilliant coloring of the







walls and ceiling was to be supplemented by furnishings of gold draperies, and crimson carpetings and seats. The pictures of Mr. Hunt were to be painted upon the gray stone walls of the arched spaces formed by the vaulted ceiling, forty feet from the floor. These large spaces were lighted, and apparently somewhat insufficiently, by rows of windows beneath them.

The above-named conditions required of the artist, therefore, compositions colossal in size, painted upon the highest possible key, and adequately brilliant in color for their surroundings. It cannot be surprising that Mr. Hunt accepted the commission for this work with great hesitation, but how bravely he succeeded in his difficult task is now well known.

The composition for the north arch, a heliotype reproduction of which is given on next page, represents Anahita, or the Goddess of Night, seated in her cloud chariot, floating down the western sky; behind her are a sleeping mother and child; before, three res-

tive horses, supposed to be attached to the chariot, and to be controlled in their mad career by the dark guide at their head. These horses are wonderfully vigorous examples of modelling; and the picture as a whole is masterly in color, and singularly brilliant in effect.

The painting on the south wall gives us a dignified central figure, the Discoverer, standing, with folded arms, in a boat that rises grandly upon the waves in mid-ocean. He looks earnestly westward for the new land. Hope, at the prow, extends her hand in the same direction, Faith hides her head, Science spreads her chart, and Fortune commands the helm and trims the sail.

This painting is not so rich in color as the other; but, in composition, offers an excellent contrast to it. This is broad, noble, and reposeful; the other, brilliant, fiery, and restless.

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Mr. Hunt was born in Brattleborough, Vt., in the year 1824. When he was eight years

of age his family removed to New Haven, Conn., where he received his first lessons in drawing, a few years later.

Entering Harvard College in 1840, he there distinguished himself less as a student of books than by his drawing, carving, his music, and his various humorous accomplishments. He left the college in his senior year for a tour in Europe. After a winter in Italy he repaired to Düsseldorf, Germany, to begin the serious study of art. At this time he proposed to become a sculptor. After two years' study he went to Paris, and, becoming interested in the paintings of Thomas Couture, finally put himself under the teaching of this artist, and determined to become a painter. He made great progress at this time, and certain characteristics of Couture's teachings were always observable in Mr. Hunt's work to the end of his life. After leaving Paris he lived at Barbizon, the home of Millet. Here he became not only the pupil, but the intimate friend and companion of this great master, whom he found to be the

ideal man and artist, and for whom he formed a love and admiration that never lessened in after years.

Returning to this country in 1855, Mr. Hunt began painting at Newport, R.I., where he remained until 1862, when he made Boston his permanent home. In 1868 he opened an art school for ladies, to which he devoted a large part of his attention for two years. In 1872 the great fire burned his studio in Summer Street with the sketches and drawings of a lifetime,—an incalculable loss,—and several valuable paintings of Millet and of his own.

A business friend, meeting Mr. Hunt soon after the fire, and knowing of the loss of his studio effects, said, "Did you lose much by the fire?"

"Why, yes," returned the artist, "I lost everything I had in my studio."

"Ah, yes! I know; but I mean property, money, you know, whether you were insured?"

Mr. Hunt finally built himself a large stu-



dio on the corner of Boylston Street and Park Square, where he held several public exhibitions of his pictures.

He died September 8, 1879, at the Isles of Shoals, whither he had gone in the vain endeavor to restore his health, which had become seriously impaired a few months after his return from Albany.

His last painting was an excellent and characteristic portrait of himself.



## RECORDS OF WILLIAM M. HUNT.

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### I.

SOME five years ago, when Mr. Hunt first came to see us, being shown into the study where several landscapes are hung, he went directly up to a Corot, and putting his face quite close to the canvas looked it over earnestly for a moment or two, and then, seating himself near it, said abruptly, "What is it makes this painting so charming? Why is it so poetic?"

No one replying, I ventured to say that it was difficult to find a reason; perhaps it was because the picture was so Corot-ish. This was no answer at all, and disregarding it, accordingly, he went on to say that it was

“because it is not what people call a finished painting. There is room for imagination in it. It is poetic. Finish up, as they call it, make everything out clear and distinct, and anybody sees all there is in about a minute. A minute is enough for a picture of that sort, and you never want to look at it again. They call Corot’s pictures sketchy, and think that he does them quickly and easily. I tell you he works years on them, and works hard.”

He then went over to a little picture by Corot hanging on the opposite wall, to which he had not apparently paid any attention, and putting his thumb on the middle distance, and moving it over the thicket of trees in an artistic way, as though he were following the directions of Corot’s brush, said, “See how beautiful that is, — how vague and indistinct! It’s a great deal harder to do that than it would have been to make all those trees out clearly. Corot knows what he’s about. He did not *begin* painting in the way he paints now. He learned from expe-

rience that this is the way to paint. He knows the worth of mystery and of hiding the appearance of hard work."

After Corot's death, in speaking of the great labor and seriousness in his pictures, Hunt said, "I went to see Corot when I was last in Paris. He is as simple and charming as his pictures, and seemed to enjoy showing his sketches and telling what he proposed to do. Mind you, he didn't speak of what he had done, but of what he proposed to do. He showed me three sketches in which the subjects were merely laid, which he said he purposed to get ready for the Exposition of three years later. Just think of it! He was going to keep these sketches by him and work over them for three years before exhibiting them. 'Yes,' said the old man, 'if the good God spares my life for three years longer, I hope to show some pictures worthy of me and worthy of our landscape painting.' Think of it! After painting for fifty years, he wanted three years more just to do certain things that he had been trying for so long,

and had never been able to do. And yet some people think his work hasty and incomplete!" I remarked that an artist had said to me that there were multitudes of false Corots in this country, and I had replied that, while there were many imitations, I did not believe that copies were very common, and they were easy to detect, as Corot was one of the difficult masters to copy. "Poh!" said the artist, "if you will lend me your best Corot I will make a copy of it in a couple of days that you cannot tell from the original. He is the easiest of all the French school to copy." "Tell him," said Mr. Hunt, "that if he kept this Corot by him ten years he couldn't copy it. I'm not sure that *anybody* could make a fine copy of Corot."

On another occasion, sitting opposite a Corot at a distance, he said, "As I see that picture now the tip of the tree there seems too strongly accented;" then crossing the room to the picture, he continued, "Yes, the end of this branch as it melts into the sky is rather strongly accented. It attracts the eye

too much," and, turning round quickly, he added earnestly and with a solemnity not unusual with him, "If Corot were here now, I think he would agree with me."

Mr. Hunt was very sparing of adverse criticism, and with the great masters like Millet, Corot, Delacroix, and others he was most reverential, whatever the nature of his criticism. A notable exception to this that I remember was in the case of Charles Jacques. This distinguished painter he disliked, and was disposed to do scant justice to his works. Being asked how he liked a certain Jacques picture, he replied, "It's better than most of his pictures, — not so stuffy." This was the highest praise he felt like giving it. Of another one of Jacques' large and pretentious canvases he said, "I don't like it. He thinks these daubs of color on the tree trunks make him a colorist like Diaz." The enmity between Millet and Jacques had, naturally, some influence in intensifying Mr. Hunt's dislike of the latter painter's work.

I asked him, one evening, if he nearly

always made drawings in charcoal of his landscapes as well as his portraits before painting. He said that he did; that it was very easily and quickly done, and gave one a correct idea of how the picture would look in oil, especially as regards composition and values. "It is a great saving of time. One may get from a few minutes' work with a bit of charcoal more practical hints than he can get sometimes by hours of painting, and he may possibly discover also that he is attempting something that he can't do at all." I remarked that I had never tried charcoal drawing, and that I proposed to attempt it during my summer vacation. "That's right," he said. "I would do it. You'll find it great fun; easy, quick, and not fatiguing. It will teach you to paint, too. You see you can get all the gradations of tone from the blackest black up to the pure white paper."

In the autumn following I showed him a dozen or more charcoal drawings from nature. He looked them over rapidly, pausing only when he saw something to praise, passing







over grave faults without notice. Presently he said, "I must do a drawing or two for you some evening, just to let you see the way I do them." Nothing more was said on the subject at the time. After he left the house the probabilities of his remembering his promise were eagerly discussed, and we concluded that the chance of it was exceedingly small; and, although very desirous of seeing him do some of his famous charcoals, we resolved that no hint should ever be given him of the promise.

On the second or third subsequent visit, however, to our great joy, Mr. Hunt cried out, as he entered the room, "Where are your charcoals? I feel just like doing some. Ah," he exclaimed, as we opened the little box of crayons for him, "these are the *petits buissons*; you want the *gros buissons*. Keep these; they'll do for some things, but they are too delicate; they break too easily. I'll send you a box of the *gros buissons*." He then seated himself, and taking the block of paper on his knees began by dashing on the paper

at one side near its margin, in the boldest hap-hazard style, a large black spot. He bore on so hard that the delicate stem of charcoal snapped almost at the start. This did not annoy him in the least, and he went on without interruption, using the fragments. One could scarcely imagine that this intensely black dot would ever make a reputable part of a picture, and he presently said, "This looks black to you, but I can't make it as black as I want to, the charcoals are so delicate. I often get a black a good deal blacker than this with the *gros buissons*." He went on with the drawing, and in about fifteen minutes it was completed. There were the dark willows at the edge of the water that spread across and made the foreground, the shore-line and the bridge in the middle distance, the hills far away, the exquisitely tender clouds just over them, and higher in the sky the nearer cloud forms, the whole reflected in the water with a success so disproportioned to the apparent labor that it seemed like magic. In fact, the whole







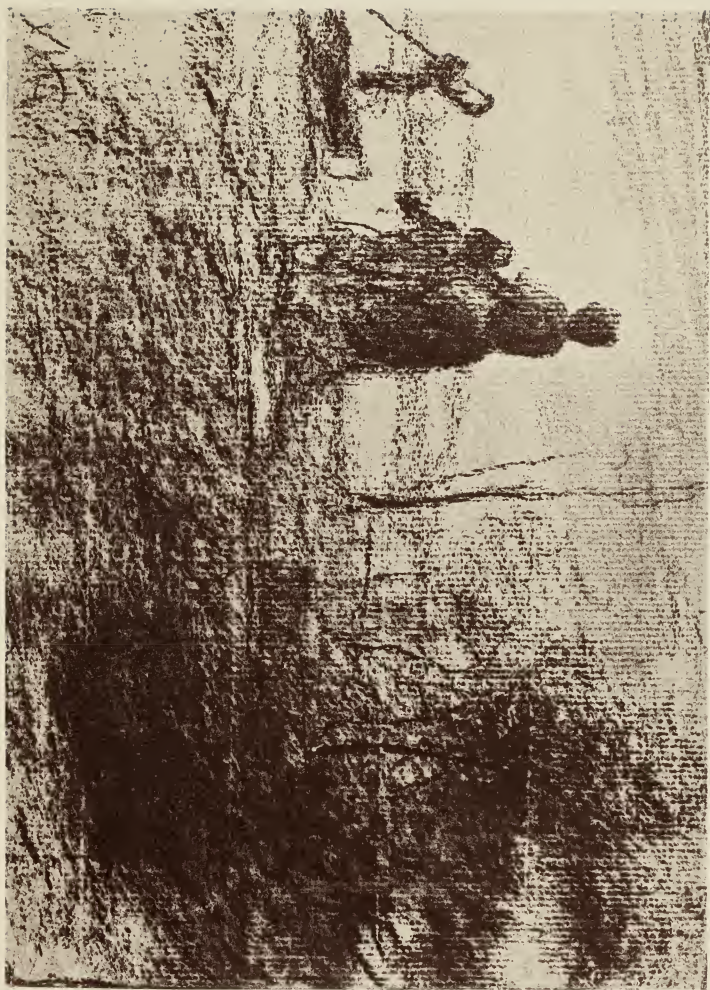
drawing was so playfully free and effortless as to suggest a lucky accident; it drew itself. The effect of this charcoal, though different in composition, reminds one of Rembrandt's etching of *The Three Trees*.

Without pausing, Mr. Hunt went on, saying that now he would sketch from memory a sea-side view, that he had left the evening before. This time he drew carefully and with effort, evidently desirous of getting a correct portrait of the spot. In composition the drawing was somewhat like the other, but in place of the clump of willows at the left a large rock jutted out into the water; beyond this the distant coast-line was made up of rocks and cedar-trees. Above there was a clear sky, with irregular cloud-lines; and still above these were heavier, unbroken clouds. In the still water of the foreground the large rock and the sky were reflected; near the shore the breeze ruffled the mirror's surface, so that no reflections were visible there; but the smooth water extended in toward the coast just far enough to catch and

reflect the tops of the rocks and trees beyond, so that a long, slender line of reflections nearly parallel with the coast reached across the middle distance. This drawing, though not academically prim, is rather precise than free. The sky and its reflection in the water are, however, more loose, and in Mr. Hunt's usual fascinating manner. The drawing is of the same size as the other, about eight by ten inches, yet it required nearly three times as long to do.

After a few moments' rest and talk about the beauty of the coast scene as he saw it, he began to draw again with an immense furor and rapidity, clearly due to the welcome reaction from the cramped exactness required by the last subject. In less than three minutes the picture was tossed from him, and another begun. Near the centre of the foreground he had drawn a clump of half a dozen poplars; beyond, a broad river, and then a perspective of hills melting away into a horizon of clouds; above, a clear sky. As a finishing touch, the figures of a woman







and a cow were put in at the left of the poplars, in five or six seconds. He next drew, with almost equal rapidity, a very poetic landscape, of about half the size of the others. The water of the immediate foreground reflected imperfectly the three or four trees at the right, and a line of extremely delicate ones extending to the centre, and farther towards the left, the finely modelled figures of a woman and child, and beyond, a man in a boat pushing off from the shore. This is one of his poetic little bits, in his daintiest and tenderest manner.

In answer to the inquiry as to how his style of doing charcoals differed from that of the French school of Lalanne and Allongé, he said that they, for instance, first covered the paper with charcoal evenly, and then removed a portion, forming the lights of the clouds; while he, on the contrary, supposed the white paper to represent the clear sky, his clouds being formed by the dark of the charcoal touches. In other parts of the picture the French school depends for the lights

upon the removal, more or less completely, of the darks. Hence their drawings are far less brilliant in tone than when done with the charcoal alone, and with as little rubbing, softening, or erasing as possible.

He then did a small picture in the manner mentioned, with light, rolling clouds on a dark background of sky, a darker middle distance, and a nearly white foreground, upon which he put, with the fewest possible strokes, a man with a pair of oxen, ploughing.

Finally, he called for a crumb of bread and as he began removing with it, carefully, the few lines that had straggled outside the field of his drawing, he said, "I'm not a very neat man about my work, but I *do* like to clean up the edges of my pictures." Then he quietly put his initials to the first, second, and fourth pictures, and the delightful lesson was over.

The next morning, to our surprise, a box of *gros buissons* was sent us. It was some days later before I realized his object in making a portion of his first picture so very black.

It was partly for the purpose of showing me the whole gamut of tint from the blackest black to the whitest white, so that many values could be made available in one drawing, and partly to show that there need be no fear in the use of charcoal that one should get too dark a tone, or start on too dark a key. Instead of telling me that my drawings were too timid and nearly colorless, he chose to do some that were as far removed as possible from either fault, and trust them to do the rest of the teaching.

Years afterwards I heard a lady at his studio ask him how long it took him to draw a certain rather elaborate charcoal picture. "Well," answered the artist, "I think it took me an hour or two; that is, I was about that time putting it on the paper there; but I suppose I ought to say that it took me forty years, as I've been drawing about that length of time."

January, 1875. There was in his studio at this time, a striking picture of a small boy fencing, that recalled at once the picture

of *The Actor*, by Velasquez, at Madrid. A remark to this effect being made the artist said, "Yes, yes; I don't know that I was thinking of Velasquez when it was painted, but possibly if Velasquez had never painted his picture this might not have been done." He seemed to take almost as much interest in a large portfolio of charcoal drawings as in his more important works, and was constantly taking up the drawings that *he* liked best, and putting them in advantageous positions.

We were invited several times to his studio during this month, never presuming to visit him without special invitation, at this time or in later years. On these occasions he seemed very merry and light hearted, and would now and then take up his banjo or guitar and play a little, sing a French song, always joke a great deal, and tell stories.

February 12th. Mr. Hunt came in and looked at a small picture by Millet, of a woman bathing. It is one of his early pictures. He took it up and said, "I remember

that picture. I saw it in one of the collections in Paris, many years ago. It's fine." To the remark that it was as good as the old masters, he replied, "It's as good as the *best* of the old masters, — as good as Correggio." This was about four o'clock in the afternoon. We then went out to one of Perabo's piano recitals at Wesleyan Hall. On the way there Mr. Hunt said, "Don't let us sit where we can't get out easily. Sometimes, you know, a fellow wants to get away pretty early, not because the music isn't good, but because one gets enough. If one piece fills you full, what's the use of spoiling your digestion by trying to take in more? When I get full I want to be able to leave quietly." So we got a seat far back, but he remained through the entire programme.

"It seems strange to sit here," he said, "and take in all this with my ears alone. I'm in the habit of taking in things with my eyes. It makes one want to shut his eyes to hear good music, so that he can concentrate his perceptions in his ears. I should think



persons hearing music constantly might become blind." Mr. Hunt was very musical: he had in his room, at one time, a piano, two violins, a banjo, and a guitar. Having an excellent ear for music he appreciated the best thoroughly; but as in painting, though conscious of any defect, he was always eager to pardon minor faults, when an artist had "something to say and said it." I remember once hearing him speak very warmly of a public singer, praising almost without stint her noble voice, her sincerity and breadth of style; adding at the end, "She's a great singer, even if she does get a little off the key sometimes."

On the way home from the concert he was very gay over what he heard a man say by way of criticism, namely, that "Perabo was quite himself to-day." Mr. Hunt kept repeating the phrase enjoyingly, and asked, "What did he mean by that, — something good, or bad? Do you suppose he knows one tune from another?" "No." "Then what does he go to concerts for?" "Because he



has a ticket given him." "And makes it out to be a very remarkable occasion because the player was 'quite himself.' I wish he would criticise pictures."

He drank tea with us, and remained until quite late in the evening. The conversation turned towards the drudgery of portrait painting and the peculiarity of sitters. He was then painting Mr. —, an elderly man. "He shakes hands every morning when he comes. Do you want to know how he does it?" He then took my hand, and holding it quite still squeezed it very hard. "What does that mean?" I asked. "It means that he isn't dead, — that's all. He's old and retired from business, and he's afraid people will think he's dead; so when he gets hold of a hand he just lets the owner of it know that he's very much alive still." Of General Dix he observed that he was a perfect gentleman in manners, — one of the old school; always deferential, continually mindful of the painter's comfort, never letting engagements interfere with sittings, punctual to come, and ready to remain.

Of another distinguished statesman he said, "He is a man who impresses you as very strong intellectually, a gentleman polished and refined; but he's a little pompous, and has the air of being afraid you won't feel his greatness unless he reminds you of it by his manner. He always fixed the time of his sittings himself. This annoyed me, but as I was his guest I let things go on in this way for a while; afterwards I had something to say about my own time for working, and we finally got on very well together."

Mr. Hunt was very intolerant of pretension, — as might be supposed from his character and writings; never assuming, himself, never pretentious, never dictatorial, he was extremely sensitive to these traits in others. He could neither overlook nor pardon them for a moment in people of position. Many, knowing him as a "hail fellow well met," full of jokes and stories, are not aware that under this democratic exterior lay the dormant but ever-present consciousness of superiority. He felt that he was deservedly the

peer of any American, of whatever position or reputation. He believed that he had done things that would live, and he did not choose to permit anybody to treat him as an inferior. Indeed, he would not permit himself to be treated with much familiarity by any one, however distinguished, unless he were an intimate friend. He would sometimes pull a letter out of his pocket and say, "This is all very well, but I don't quite like the familiar tone."

One evening, just after an exhibition of pictures at his studio, he came in quite tired and sensitive and said that Mr. — (mentioning the name of a man of wealth and prominence) came into the studio and swaggered about with his hat on. "I tell you, I came within an ace of just going up and smashing his hat down on to his chin; but if I had I shouldn't have stopped at that; I should have kicked him out of the room, too. It wouldn't have been more than he deserved. What business had he, a man I never spoke to more than twice in my life,

to swell round in my studio with his hat on! *You* may wear your hat there as much as you please, and so may any of my friends. You know I often insist on their remaining covered. I care nothing about it if a man is a gentleman. But old —— is not a gentleman, and if he ever does that thing again I'll send my boy to him and tell him to take off his hat."

Of Mr. ——, once a sitter, he said, "I wanted to paint him very much, not merely because he is famous, but because he has a striking face, and I thought I could do it justice. So I took great interest in the portrait, and gave myself the trouble of preparing several canvases and making a number of preliminary sketches. When he came to me, although very polite, he had on his air of condescension, and intimated that he was doing a thing of no account just to please his friends. After sitting for about an hour, he took out his watch, and said he had an engagement. I didn't set any time for the next sitting, and when, some weeks after,

his friends came in to see when he should come again, I told them I would let them know when I was ready. I *will* let 'em know when I'm ready, but it will be when we are both a good deal older than we are now. If he doesn't *want* his portrait painted, and doesn't want it painted by me, I don't propose to paint it. I *did* want to paint it, and looked forward to doing it with the greatest interest."

Of a portrait of R., a prominent man, I said to him, "It is good, a faultless likeness and fine in color, but I don't think it one of your best. You haven't made any more of him than he is. Just look at the portrait of X.! It is perfect as a likeness, and yet he has the air of a Roman emperor." "Well," said Mr. Hunt, "a fellow *could* make a Roman emperor of X., because he *is* an emperor in his way, but R. is just as big as he looks, and no bigger. I could get nothing big out of him. He impressed me as a big talker, and that's all."

The following anecdote was given me by

an artist friend of Mr. Hunt, and is, I think, substantially correct. He had painted for one of his patrons a figure in a blue dress, and later, while engaged in painting another portrait in a dress of the same color, he was asked by the owner of the former picture not to duplicate the blue dress. The only reply the artist made was to ask if he had a patent on this particular color, and he went on painting the dress as he had begun.

On another occasion the following document was sent for his signature: "Received of Mr. — fifty dollars for finishing up a portrait." Mr. Hunt refused his signature, but instead wrote as follows: "Received of Mr. — fifty dollars for working a week on a picture after it was finished. W. M. HUNT."

May 13, 1875. Mr. Hunt invited a few friends to his studio to meet William Warren and Joseph Jefferson. The affair was very enjoyable, and passed off to his entire satisfaction. In speaking of it later he said, "I hardly dared to invite Warren and Jefferson; still I thought they could refuse, or



My dear Dr Angell

Will you  
meet Mr Warren  
& Mr Jeffers on  
at my Studio  
Thursday  
tomorrow at 2  
P.M.

Yours  
Tristram



say they were engaged, if they didn't want to come. But they said they would come in for a little while. As they stayed three hours or more, I think they must have had a pretty good time." One of the other guests present was a man of great dignity and social position, and I remember that Mr. Hunt said to him, "I was rather afraid to ask you here, you've got to be such a great man; I thought probably you'd feel too big to come, but I'm glad" — And here Mr. Hunt rushed up and threw his arms round him and gave him a hearty hug. I was astonished at his temerity, but no harm came of it.

"How nice Mr. Warren looked, didn't he?" said Mr. Hunt. "I've always said that he's the only man I ever saw that makes me want to wear a wig."

June 9th. He came to use early, and stayed very late. The portrait called The Old Professor, of Duveneck, interested him exceedingly. He took it in his lap and fondled it for a half hour or more, even while talking

of other matters. A few evenings later he begged us to lend it to him for a short time: he wished to see how it looked in his studio: and so he carried it off under his arm, frame and all, refusing to have it sent round to him in the morning. He also showed us a very friendly letter from Duveneek, in response to an invitation from him to remain and paint in Boston. So far from feeling jealous of Duveneek's talent, as had been alleged, he would gladly have had him live in Boston, and would have done all he could to help him to get orders. Later in the year, when Duveneek was in Boston, Mr. Hunt expressed great regret at not meeting him.

This evening he was a little disposed to scold the picture dealers, and expose some of their expedients to prevent the public from meeting the artists face to face.

He told the story of a little child who said, one day, when the servants were noisy, that "she felt as if the wolves were smoothing their voices on her back." Of an old woman, the same little girl said that she was as slow "as two big rocks in a pretty high wind."

During August of this year Mr. Hunt was very busy in the construction of what he called his van, — a large covered sketching wagon, commodious enough to live in while on a sketching tour; built, as he said with great glee, “by a man who builds gypsy wagons.” It had all kinds of drawers in it for pots, kettles, and painting utensils, and was to be drawn about to eligible sketching grounds by a span of horses; the man who sold him the harnesses sold him, at the same time, a powder to cure galled spots in horses, that was also a good tooth powder. The same man had, further, a contrivance for pulling up runaway horses that lifted them right off their feet, and a pail for feeding, with a crane under it!

The painter laughed heartily over the story he had just heard of two ladies, who, stopping in a country drive to water their horse at a brook, unbuckled the crupper, so that the horse should reach the water.

He said that the van was so easy that driving in it was like being up in a balloon, and

gave the pleasantest possible proof of his assertion, one afternoon later, by driving us twenty-five miles in it. The drive was delightful, and the van extremely comfortable, but it left a consciousness for a day or two that an experimental drive of twenty-five miles, even in a van, is rather long.

It is doubtful if he found the new carriage as pleasurable or at least as serviceable for professional tours as he anticipated. Perhaps this would have been impossible, but as it was not spoken of much after a few weeks, we inferred that it was found to be a more cumbersome vehicle than he liked.

Mr. Hunt was very fond of horses, often driving a pair, and keeping four or five, besides a saddle-horse or two. He liked fine roadsters rather than fast trotters, and never raced, though generally driving fast and pretty far. Making pets of his horses, and frequently descanting on their individuality, he was, nevertheless, like other horse fanciers, disposed to buy and sell often. If a horse pleased him, the desire of possession was

nearly irresistible, and the purchase of one necessitated the disposal of others.

Having, at one time, some trouble with horse-shoers, we inquired of him whom he employed for his horses. "Oh," he exclaimed, "don't ask! I don't know. I don't want to hate anybody in particular. If I knew, I should hate a man; now I only hate a race."

Horses were to be depended on until they ran away once, Mr. Hunt said; "and then they were like the man who jumped up and down in his back yard, with his mouth wide open, while his house was burning, thinking he was crying fire."

## II.

DURING the long evenings of early winter he was very cheerful and happy, full of fun and stories. One evening he told us of his big, balky horse that he had tried to cure by electricity. I wish that I dared attempt his description of the astonishment of the horse, and his sudden increase in size, when the current of electricity first struck him; the remedy did not prove a curative.

He told us a story of a monkey in Düsseldorf. The monkey was a very intelligent one, and greatly petted by his master, a professor in the art school. He was in the habit of giving the monkey daily some lumps of sugar in a small covered box. The little fellow was fond of opening and closing the box, and of helping himself to the sugar. As a matter of sport, the professor substituted for the sugar-box, one day, a box of exactly the

same size and appearance, but which contained, instead of sugar, a horrid image that sprang out the moment the cover was raised. The unsuspecting monkey opening the box as usual for his sugar, the jack jumped out, and, dropping it, he rushed to the farthest corner of his cage, and there remained trembling all day; no coaxing could get him near the awful box, and it was finally removed from the cage. The next day the genuine box of sugar was put into the cage; but the cautious monkey was not to be caught again. He remained in his corner, and looked distrustfully at the peace-offering. It might be the same terrible box; who could tell? After a while, however, his desire for sugar led him to venture a little nearer the box, and so, keeping himself at a prudent distance, he went round and round it, trying to make up his mind whether any reasonably safe attempt on the contents of the box were possible. He got nearer, and gave the box a little punch; then another; then he knocked it about his cage smartly, and no harm came of

it. He took it up and carefully inspected it on all sides, and found it apparently quite satisfactory. Then, putting it down, the momentous question of opening the box was quickly decided; he made a rush at the cover, removing it and jumping suddenly back, but no terrible jack appeared. He went cautiously up and looked in; there were his harmless little lumps of sugar,—nothing more.

Never was a monkey happier. He chattered and played all the day long, evidently regarding his fearful experience as an ugly dream, or as the result of a diseased imagination. But his happiness was short-lived; the next day the jack-in-the-box was put in the cage, and again the monkey was frightened and perplexed, and the box had to be removed from the cage as before. Then, in due time, the jack was put back in place of the sugar; and so the poor animal was kept in anxious uncertainty, until he grew thin and nervous, and lost his appetite and sickened, and the experiment was given up. Af-



ter a time he recovered his health and spirits, and then, just for once, his master thought he would put the jack into the cage, instead of the sugar, to see if the monkey minded it as formerly. The confiding little fellow opened the box, the jack leaped out, and the monkey fell back dead.

At one of his visits about this time Mr. Hunt informed us of his having been invited by a committee to lecture, some Sunday afternoon, in the Horticultural Hall course. We advised him by all means to accept, and he thought perhaps he might. He would take for a subject the connection between religion and art, and he ran on and told us what he proposed to say, talking steadily nearly an hour. After finishing, he said, "There! if some one could have taken down what I have been saying, it would be just what I want for the lecture." I offered to write out in the morning all I could remember, and he gladly accepted the proposal. A week later he had given up all notion of lecturing. The notes that I prepared for him have since been mislaid, much to my regret.

During the spring of 1877 he came often to the house, one evening marching into the study playing Home Sweet Home on a little mouth-organ. We always could tell how things were going with him by the frequency of his visits. When he was happy he came often. If dispirited or anxious over a difficult portrait, or from some other cause, his visits were less frequent. He said to us frankly that he would not come and be a bore, never realizing for a moment that he *could* not be a bore, whatever his mood. Sometimes he would come when he was not feeling in good spirits, and then we could see that he was exerting himself to be merry. On such occasions he would be more gentle and tender than usual, but there would be lapses in his gayety, and he would sit silent, biting his finger-nails, his thoughts away in his studio or elsewhere.

He was singularly afraid of boring people, and when about to confer the greatest possible boon, namely, the taking of us to his studio, he would beat about the bush, and

almost never put the proposition in direct terms: "I've got two or three little things over at the studio that I'm going to show you some time; would you mind going over to-night, or some other night? I'm sorry it's so cold, but I rather want you to see the things right off, now; I can't wait very well." Sometimes, after sitting for a half hour or more, he would say, "Well, I came in to-night to ask you to go over to the studio, but, really, I think it an imposition, you are so comfortable here; but I should like you to see a head I've just been working on." This was not an affectation of manner; it was ever and under all circumstances the same. He always considered that we were doing him a favor to go with him to his studio, and that our acceptance of his invitation was possibly a matter of doubt, as if it were not the greatest possible pleasure to go to his studio and discuss his pictures with him; we would have gone twenty times oftener if asked. But to the very last his invitations were apologetic or timid, and when he got

us before his pictures, in the enjoyment of our admiration and enthusiasm, he would sometimes confess that he came to us a few evenings before for the express purpose of inviting us to his studio; but after all, he didn't know that we should like the pictures, and he feared he might be dragging us out too often, and so he said nothing about it.

One evening in May he got upon the subject of pigments. I had started him off by telling him that I had some Veronese green so thin that I could find no effect from it. It resulted in nothing on the canvas.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Hunt, "I know that kind of green; the more you put on, the less color you have. It vanishes. It's too thin to run up-hill. I tell you, if the Frenchmen had to paint with our pigments, you wouldn't hear much about their pictures." "After all," he went on to say, "the nearest thing to nature is a black-and-white drawing. Harmony is the great thing to strive for, and one is surer of this in black and white. In nearly all paintings there is a certain lack of har-

mony, and therefore a good drawing is more satisfactory. Suggestion of color is better than color itself. What green is to landscape red is to flesh. All landscape painting is too green; the green should be felt beneath the neutral tint in landscape, just as the red should be felt beneath the gray tones in flesh painting. Both Millet and Correggio paint brown, and then contrast it with a blue that appears blue, but which is really a green. Their pictures do not strike one as brown."

The last time he was in Paris, Millet told him that he would paint a blonde so that he could put pure white for the highest lights of the face. "If the effect is harmonious, it makes no difference what key we paint on, high or low; but, as in music, one must begin and end on the same key. Painting is vulgar by the side of a fine charcoal drawing. Imagination and suggestion are everything in art. Color is vulgar, because it is in the direction of imitation. It is prose instead of poetry. The less imitation the more suggestion, and hence the more imagination and

poetry. Drawing as compared with painting is more refined, and therefore truer art."

During this month we spent a day and night as guests with him at North Easton. With all his endeavors, he was not quite at his best there, being anxious lest our eating and sleeping should not be exactly what he wished; he had brought out from Boston some bananas and other fruits for a supplementary course at dinner. In the evening, on coming in, he asked for a bit of charcoal, to give the effect of a view he had just seen on the river. No charcoal was to be found, so he took a bit of cork, and holding it over the light manufactured his coal, and then drew on a scrap of paper a heavy mass of trees against a bright sunset sky, reflecting them in the water below. A brother artist who was with him when he saw the sunset, remarked afterwards, that Mr. Hunt had got the effect on his piece of paper, and that he had a marvellous facility for remembering and reproducing an impression with a few simple touches.

One evening, this month, Mr. Hunt came to tea, and went with us to a concert, which he heartily enjoyed. Miss Cary was the principal singer, and her appearance and manner on the stage impressed him strongly. After the concert he was full of talk about her breadth of style, her repose, dignity, large impression, and her grand and noble person. She was dressed in white, and looked very large to him. He would like to paint her. She would weigh more than a hundred and eighty, and he would have his painting weigh as much as she. It would take fifteen hundred tubes of white paint. "Her singing is fine and satisfactory. It has variety of color and tint. Like painting, music requires this."

It was about this time that Mr. Hunt concluded that bread and milk was the only proper diet for him. When asked if he thought he should ever drink tea or coffee again, he said that he knew he shouldn't. At another time he would drink tea and cold water, no wine. Cold water, he argued, was

the natural drink for mankind. He never felt so well as when drinking water, and plenty of it. Sometimes, for a month or so, he would not smoke, no matter how mild or how good the cigar offered him. Nothing could shake his resolution in these matters. He would listen patiently to your arguments in favor of moderation; with the greatest gravity, he would even help you to put them in the most plausible form; but no practical results followed. In due time he ate and drank and smoked again as other men. At one period he was fond of smoking a very low-priced, mild cigar. For the time being he argued that it was foolish for a man to give more than five cents for a cigar; and he related with great satisfaction how he went into the Parker House, where several persons were about the bar smoking their fine Havanas, and called out in a loud voice, "Give me a five-cent cigar." Soon after this we noticed in his studio a box of choice Havanas, so fine that each cigar was provided with its individual bracelet. Putting on his very



funniest expression, the artist showed us how he was withdrawing a fine-cigar now and then from beneath, and putting its bracelet on to a five cent one, and then slyly filling up the hole with it. In this way, as he explained, he kept his box full of nice cigars.

A lady was describing to him an artist with whom he was unacquainted. "He is," she began, "light complexioned, freckled," — "Yes, yes, I know," interrupted Mr. Hunt, "and he always wears brown clothes." "How did you know? Have you seen him?" "No, I've never seen him, but that kind of fellow always wears brown clothes."

Mr. Hunt was not, in the ordinary sense, a reader; I am sure, at least, that he read few books during the five years of his life that we knew him intimately. His conversation at times pointed to a considerable familiarity with certain parts of the Bible which he had read and discussed with Millet many years earlier, with parts of Shakespeare and with the literature of art. He liked to refer to Hazlitt's art criticisms and to the poetry

of Robert Browning, accrediting the latter with far more correct ideas on art than most of the other poets. He liked also the writings of Taine, and asked us to read what Fromentin said of Rembrandt's work at the time it appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Considering that he read so seldom, it was rather surprising that his want of book knowledge did not make itself more felt; but he remembered everything that he read as well as everything that he heard, and, besides, what he had of his own to say was better than anything in books. He was no reflected light. His talk was more generally the result of his personal experience or observation. Never a gossip, he talked of trivialities only as they afforded him scope for his irrepressible love of grotesque narrative. He rarely spoke on current topics such as are discussed in the newspapers, and one seldom got from his conversation the slightest hint of his newspaper reading. It is said that he skimmed a daily paper quite regularly, generally tossing it down after a mo-

ment or two, with the remark that "it is strange people can read such stuff." He seldom discussed politics, and never voted, so far as I know, after the close of the war. During the war period he was deeply stirred and very loyal. He had two long interviews with John Brown, and was greatly impressed by him. He thought him a marvellous person; a great hero, reminding one of the old prophets, he said. He made arrangements to paint his portrait, but meantime Brown went suddenly to his death in Virginia. At that time he was a strong Republican, but later, appeared to have no party preferences whatever, condemning both parties in good round terms. He once spoke favorably of Bristow as a presidential candidate; but he had lately been in bathing with him at the beach, and the latter's fine, robust figure, which he liked, had, we thought, something to do with his preference.

Mr. Hunt was very tenacious of cherished opinions, though never egotistic or overbearing; always ready to listen to dissenting

views, and desirous of modifying or changing his own whenever shown that he was wrong. His opinions in art matters were so well considered, so thoroughly sound, that it was not easy for one to show him weak points in them; yet he never seemed to expect anybody to believe a thing because he said it, but was prepared with an abundance of argument and illustration to prove it true. It gave him, usually, little effort to vanquish an opponent in a discussion on the principles or practice of art, and so deftly would it be done that his adversary's sense of discomfiture was rather pleasurable and satisfactory than otherwise. Once vanquished, however, one felt that he was to remain vanquished. There were, nevertheless, many things in art that Mr. Hunt was not sure about, and these he always spoke of as points that he could not pretend to decide.

He had, as I have said, a remarkable memory. Nothing great or small could escape it. He would recall trivial remarks months and years old. Social engagements,

however, he found great difficulty in remembering; but those who knew him well knew exactly which ones he would remember and which forget. "Don't let's name any particular hour, I haven't got any watch now," or, "My watch doesn't keep any sort of time," or, "Yes, yes, I'll try and come round. What time did you say?" All this meant that he would forget; but if he looked at one earnestly, and said "Yes" to an invitation, without qualifications, it meant yes, and we so understood it. Engagements, he said, were like a millstone about his neck; they were like a cold buckwheat cake. Other than unimportant social engagements he kept to the very letter, and required others to keep. As a man of business he was exact, and more methodical than is generally supposed.

One evening in the winter of 1877, he came in to see us, and finally got to talking about the Art School at the Museum. It was all very well that the school should not give perfect satisfaction. It would not do to be too easily satisfied. He kept clear of the

whole thing as much as possible. "They make too much fuss over the students. If two per cent. or one per cent. make anything of artists, it is as much as one should expect. Grundemann is painstaking, and perhaps well enough as a teacher; possibly not broad enough; but let him go on five years at least before judging of his qualifications. They think over there that the school, if good enough, must make artists. There never was a greater mistake. Why don't they set up a school to make poets? All that a teacher can do is to teach. If the stuff is in a pupil he may make a painter. It was the mackerel out of the school that fattened Daniel Webster." He was quite merry over his answer to some of the committee who asked his views of the proper limits as to the age of pupils to be admitted to the art instruction. He replied that none should be admitted under four years of age, and none above eighty.

Looking at a large landscape in the room, he said, "As a rule, vertical lines darker,

horizontal lines lighter; but one can't paint by rule; circumstances may require the horizontal lines to be darkest. There is a good effect of light in this sky. Light in the sky or elsewhere is not so well produced by putting dark against it as by a gradation of tone from the dark towards it. Light radiates, and one must try to produce the appearance of radiation to get the highest effect. No matter if the picture be on a low key. Neither, if the gradation is finely done, need the dark be very dark nor the light very light. Atmosphere and light are the great things to work for in landscape painting."

On another occasion, being asked if a certain landscape painting were not too green, he answered, "Too green? No, not too green if you felt like painting green. If one feels like painting green, it's best to paint green. Under such circumstances it's of no use to try to paint any other color. If you feel like painting brown or gray, paint those colors."

In a conversation about the photographing of his pictures, he was asked, in consideration of the fact that yellow came out black, and purple white, in a photograph, why one should not paint with a view to photography, so that the lights and darks would represent the intentions of the artist. "Because one should not paint with a view to anything but to paint his picture. If you have views of anything beyond that, you do poor, mechanical work."

Mr. Hunt was especially lenient towards earnest work of *young* artists. He was severe on pretension and conceit only. Of a portrait he said there was "no inside to it. It looked like a bug that another bug had eaten up all except the shell."

There was never a question as to how Mr. Hunt should be entertained, for he entertained himself as well as those about him. No subject was too great for him to discuss, and none too small. He interested himself at one time greatly in our Manx cats, discovering that it was difficult to determine their



centre of gravity ; that their whole anatomy and movements differed entirely from those of cats with tails. He studied our family of Manx kittens, and finding their nest not sufficiently sumptuous sent one morning, with his compliments, a handsome cat basket, for their use.

Afterwards he was amused to learn that the old cat had found his elegant basket an unsafe repository for her family, and had lugged them off, while her unregenerate, grown-up, fighting son, of fringed ears and bruised aspect, had taken possession of it uninvited, spending his entire days in it and such nights as his professional engagements would permit of.

Mr. Hunt was ready to take part in whatever was going on in the house. One evening his hostess was doing some fancy patchwork, and immediately he became absorbed in its condition and development, requesting the liberty of sewing in a square, which he did on the spot with stitches so neat as to excite extravagant admiration. The deli-

cacy and dexterity of his manipulations were sometimes astonishing. Once, in speaking of his ability to do fine work with the brush, if he chose, he asked for a pencil, and taking a bit of note paper wrote one of our names, made up of seven letters, one of them a capital, so fine that I found a magnifying-glass indispensable for reading it. The space taken up by the seven letters was just one eighth of an inch in length, every letter being firm and distinctly legible. On putting down the pencil he remarked, "That isn't nearly as fine as I can write sometimes. I could do much better with a fine-pointed pencil. Still, this isn't easy to do; just try it." And we all tried it, and found it impossible. One cold evening a lady complained of a crack on the end of her forefinger that would not heal and was very sore. "Let me fix it," said Mr. Hunt. He took out his penknife, sharpened it on his boot, and proceeded to pare the skin down thin at the edges of the crack, not an easy thing to do at the end of the finger, and a task requiring

considerable confidence in both patient and operator; but he did it neatly, and, advising a poultice for the night, promised that it should be a cure in thirty-six hours; and it was.

I have known him to paint an hour or more on a cow less than an inch and a half in length, supposed to be already finished. He first scraped off the surface of the paint with a knife, giving it a speckled look, and, remarking that he guessed he would make a tortoise-shell cow of it, worked continuously and deliberately with fine sable brushes until he had what he called "a finished cow."

I mention with great satisfaction the fact of his working so long and patiently on this small cow, because, like Rubens, he was fond of painting with great sweeps of the brush; as a result of this it has happened that persons who dislike brush marks and roughness of surface, have so associated his name with these characteristics of rapid execution, as to overlook his work of an entirely different character.

I remember to have met one who seriously argued that Mr. Hunt could neither draw nor paint in what is called a finished style.

For a month or more, at one time, when taking wine in the evening with us, he was in the habit of resting his empty wine-glass on the top of his head. There he would sit on the sofa nodding his head in conversation, but never permitting the glass to fall. The top of his head was very smooth, and we were apprehensive, and this gave great zest to his performance. After a while we became used to this habit, but one evening the wine-glass slid from his head and broke on the carpet. This ended the performance forever ; he could not be persuaded to try it again.

A few evenings later he amused us and himself by substituting for the wine-glass a smooth paper-weight, which he balanced on his head as before ; to vary the entertainment he would now and then put a sheet of paper under the weight, and then snatch it quickly away, leaving the paper-weight undisturbed on his head.

He is said to have practised putting his soup plate on top of his head at the restaurants, for the convenience of the waiters; but he did nothing of the kind on the evening when he invited us all to dine with him at a little place behind the Public Library. As usual when entertaining guests, he was over-anxious lest everything should not pass off exactly as he wished, and so behaved more like other people. Still, the occasion seemed to afford him great satisfaction, for when he came to us, a few evenings afterward, he said as he left the door, holding up the fingers of one hand, "There are only about so many of us in Boston, you know; we ought to meet in that way oftener." Who the other three were I never knew with certainty; I could only be sure that one was Mr. Thomas Robinson, for whom he had the tenderest possible friendship. He was an enthusiastic admirer of the talent of his friend, also. Of the head of a bull by Robinson in our possession, he said, "I don't believe there is a man living at the present time who could

paint this subject as well as Tom has done it in that picture.”

January 18, 1878. Mr. Hunt came in rather late, but seemed desirous that we should go over to his studio and see an unfinished sunset that he was at work on. It promised to be very fine, but for some reason or other it was never completed. He took out from a large depository several other new paintings, notably the two views, almost exactly alike, of Gloucester Harbor. They were of the same tone and on the same key; but the first was, technically speaking, somewhat smoother, while the second had a little more light in it. The latter was painted with almost inconceivable rapidity, within three hours, and never touched afterwards. I remember also a large landscape, more than twice the size of these, that Mr. Hunt told me was one of *two pictures* that he had painted in one day. I recall the more important fact that the landscape in question was one of his best and one of the finest I know, exquisitely gray and silvery in tone











the intense artistic temperament; indeed almost the only conspicuous examples among the great painters of calm, judicial, unbiased opinions upon contemporary work are seen in Rubens and Velasquez. Reynolds is a noteworthy example of the opposite kind.

One evening, Mr. Hunt sat with a cheerful little Dupré in his lap for half an hour, praising it without stint, and the next day shut himself in his studio and painted a brown picture that strikingly recalled the Dupré in color and composition. When I first saw his brown painting, some weeks afterwards, I exclaimed at once, "There you have a Dupré picture!" But the artist made no response, nor did we learn until some time later that it had been painted under the circumstances above stated. Being shown a spring landscape, he studied it over some time, and then exclaimed, "I'm going to paint a spring picture!" This was near the first of May, and in a few days we were invited to see his new picture, which proved to be the painting that he named Spring

Chickens, the original charcoal drawing of which he presented us, possibly as an acknowledgment of our claim for the motive of the new picture.

Being shown a small painting by Kühl, a Munich artist, representing a drunken man holding a half-filled glass of wine in each hand, he remarked, "It is very skillfully done, but what is the use of doing it? Why choose such a subject, when pleasant ones are all around us? The subject isn't worthy of the painter."

Of the landscapes of a number of the students of the Munich school in New York he said, "They show the result of good schooling; yes, they have a neat little recipe for skies." He was very intolerant of everything in painting that savored of a school or established method, and vastly pleased over anything that exhibited evidence of earnest, independent work, no matter how crude. Amateur paintings attracted his attention at once if they happened to have some merit. Now and then we used to put such a picture







over the table in the study, in a good light. If there was the least bit of good in it, Mr. Hunt noticed it immediately on entering the room. He would say from across the room, "Ah, a new picture! When did you do that? I like it," or, "You've got a good sky; there's light in it," or, "That's amusing; you've got a fuller color than usual in your trees." If the picture pleased him still better, he would go to it, look it over closely to see how it had been done, and then say, "I like it," simply, or perhaps add, "You might have saved yourself these strokes of the brush here in the foreground; they don't count for anything." If, however, the picture put over the table for him to see was too poor, he never appeared to see it. Under such circumstances he would sit over against it all the evening, and never be caught looking at it once. I remember such an occasion, when, having put a little *chef d'œuvre*, as I half feared and hoped, in its proper place, the coming of Mr. Hunt was impatiently awaited. When at last he came, to our sur-

prise no notice was taken of the new picture. Lest this should be mere accident or oversight, I took great pains during the evening, not to obstruct his sight by getting between him and the cherished object. It was all to no purpose. There was red, white, and blue in the picture, but he didn't see it.

It is remarkable, considering the provocation to which he was subjected, that he should never have criticised one of these pictures adversely. Occasionally he made suggestions in a quiet, confidential kind of way. For instance, in a picture where, in the middle distance, there were some slim young walnut-trees put against the highest light of the sky, he said, "I think, perhaps, there is a little too much color in those trees. Against that bright sky I doubt if one would see much color; they would be more neutral in tone. Still, I'm not sure about it. I'd think it over before doing anything; but my impression is now that if the color were taken out of the trees it would be truer to nature, and help the picture otherwise. But don't



do it until you think it over; it's possible it may be better as it is."

Being asked if he liked, personally, a certain young artist, of affected manner and foppish appearance, he replied, "I don't know him. I know his clothes. I've always known his clothes, but I don't know *him*. I can have nothing to do with such a man when I meet him; I look right through and beyond and around him."

Starting out, one morning, from his Tremont Street studio for his breakfast, he encountered an old woman on the stairs carrying down a big box of ashes. He at once insisted on lending a hand, and, taking half the burden upon himself, they landed it on the sidewalk together. "I didn't dare to look up," he said, "but I could feel the eyes of people boring into my back."

June, 1878. Mr. Hunt wrote us from Niagara Falls that he had definitely accepted the contract for painting two large pictures on the walls of the Assembly Chamber at Albany. He had accepted the offer with

great hesitation. On one occasion he said he was almost sorry that he had entertained the project at all. It was an immense job. The risk of failure was too great; he had never done anything of the kind. He should feel happier if they would just withdraw their proposal; it would take a load off his mind.

Two weeks later he came home from Niagara, and was enthusiastic over the grandeur of the falls and the artistic beauties of the neighborhood, talking of this subject and the projected Albany pictures the entire evening. He wished one of the Albany paintings to be a large view of Niagara, which he thought he could make attractive for the position, and which would be very appropriate as representing a magnificent bit of scenery within the limits of the State. But the authorities preferred *The Discoverer* as a companion picture for the *Anahita*.

His last visit to us before leaving for Albany was on the evening of October 9th. He had been working hard over the large sketches and the separate figures, and was of

course anxious as to the success of his great venture and impatient to get at the work in Albany, the beginning of which had been delayed owing to tardiness of some sort there, and which, nevertheless, must be finished by the first of January, so that the chamber should be in order for the meeting of the legislature. He appeared tired, this evening, but was very gentle and kind, and left us the impression that he was already a little homesick in anticipation of his enforced stay at Albany. His mirth seemed forced, and when he left he was quite unnaturally jolly, declaring that it wasn't worth while to say good-by, that he should be back again in Boston in no time, that the time would pass very quickly, and that he hardly felt as though he were leaving Boston at all.

On October 30th he sent us photographs of the condition of his work at that time, accompanied by the following characteristic letter: —

ALBANY, October 28, 1878.

MY DEAR —: I think I must send you a photograph of the walls as a record of the work thus far. One week at work, and the outlines are about completed, and painting begins, I hope, to-morrow.

I can tell you, it is like sailing a seventy-four, or riding eight horses in a circus. It fills one's lungs to breathe in front of such spaces. The figure of Columbus, or the Discoverer, is eleven feet from his crown to the boat where his shins disappear. His hand is broader than this page is long. The scaffolding is spacious, and the bridge connecting the two is about seven feet wide and seventy feet long; so you see everything is in proportion, and it is delightful to work forty feet from the floor.

It will be a great mortification if we don't succeed. Just think of a twin mortification forty-five by sixteen!

Yours truly,

W. M. HUNT.

P. S. It is lucky that I am growing farsighted and require large print at a distance. Remember me kindly to all.

Soon after the receipt of this letter we heard that he was working very hard, — a part of the night by calcium light, as well as during the whole day, — and we wrote expressing fear for his health, and advising him not to work by night and to take plenty of sleep. This was his answer : —

ALBANY, *Sunday, November 24, 1878.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS: I received your note of warning not to paint all night, and I follow your advice to the letter, for I paint all day, and should be only too thankful (I think) to have a light of any kind these dark days. As you may imagine, a scaffold ten feet wide throws quite a shadow, when there is light enough to throw anything. We have been obliged for the last week to use torches when we want to see our work clearly, and we begin about nine o'clock, A. M., and come away about six o'clock, P. M. Lunch on board.

Now you needn't pity us a bit, and this apparent whining is merely a form of brag,

or something that we are rather proud of, and something for an excuse to sing about if the things look ill when the staging comes down.

It is good, steady, long-winded work, and enough of it, — that's just what it is; immensely instructive, I can tell you; and I can conceive now more readily why those old fellows were not idiots or nigglers in their business, after they had passed a life in front of walls and painted over every large room they had ever lived in.

We have every encouragement here, and our employers are pleased with the work thus far. All the stone-cutters take great interest in it, and that is very encouraging.

We have every advantage here, except that we have had thus far no art critics. I suppose that if we had been assisted by their presence and advice we should have already finished our work.

Oh, it is a luxury to work unsurrounded by whiners!

We can paint horses sky blue if we choose, and nobody begs us to desist.

If the work looks well when it is done, I shall insist on your coming up; if not—when we meet we'll act as though nothing had happened.

Yours truly, W. M. HUNT.

P. S. Have you heard anything of the body in Boston?

P. P. S. Have there been any traces in Boston?

P. SSS. If you hear anything of the "body," please inform.

The several postscripts related to the search for the stolen body of Stewart, in which, it appears, he had a very active interest.

November 29, 1878. Mr. Hunt spent a long evening with us. He had arrived in town the day before, and had intended to pass his first evening at our house, but on calling and finding us out, he had enjoined silence upon the servant, and, trusting to luck that we should hear nothing of him about town, he managed to take us entirely

by surprise. He walked in upon us unannounced, and was as happy and light-hearted all the evening as we had ever seen him. The talk naturally turned to his all-absorbing work at Albany, and although he spoke of it as if there were still a possibility of failure, his manner and his happiness told of assured success.

We visited him at Albany on December 24th. He was very cordial and light-hearted, and appeared well satisfied with his work, though a little apprehensive of the critics. After finishing his pictures he took a short vacation in the country, and returned to Boston. He seemed very tired, mentally and physically, at this time, and although cheerful, it was not the sunny, wayward cheerfulness of old times. The swollen knee, to which it had been necessary to apply a surgical bandage during the last days of his fatiguing work at Albany, was still a cause of anxiety. Nevertheless, although, as he expressed it, he felt played out, he thought he might begin on some portraits in the course



of a week or two. When told that he should not touch a brush for at least two months, and could not possibly get rested sooner, he would not believe it. In about three weeks he began painting, but was forced to stop again and take more rest; he soon resumed work, and did, as is well known, some of the best painting of his life. The Gardner portrait, for example, seems to be in important respects, his best. As a painting it is probably as fine as anything that has been done in America, and takes rank with the best of all time.

He was not well during this winter and spring, and was apt to relapse into an irritable mood and scold the critics in an excitable way. His visits to us were rather infrequent. During the two evenings that he spent with us in March, it was remarked that he had lost his old gayety of manner. He seemed to be conscious of this change himself, and endeavored to make up for it by greater kindness and gentleness. His last evening at our house, and the last time we

saw him, was on the 7th of April, 1879. He was never more cordial than on this occasion, but all he said and did appeared the result of effort. He said he was very tired, and being offered wine put his hand in his pocket and took out some malt, saying that this was the only wine he allowed himself now. Soon after nine o'clock he said he must go home, so as to get to bed early, and presently, his companion not being quite ready to go, he took her gently by the ear and led her out into the hall, saying, "*I must go*," an expression that we had never heard him use before with earnestness. As he passed out of the door with a ringing "Good-night," one of us said, "We shall never see him again;" the other, "Oh, yes; he has a splendid constitution. A summer's rest will bring him all right again."

## III.

MR. HUNT was one of the most patient of men when patience became really necessary ; yet the exercise of this virtue was not pleasant to him. It wore upon his nervous strength and exhausted him. It was admirable, but it was costly, and when all outward manifestations bespoke submission and harmony he was often most restive. The delays incident to the acceptance of the contract for the Albany work, and the subsequent waiting for the room to be got into condition for him to begin painting, were severely felt. Some extracts from letters dated at his studio and addressed to his assistant, while the latter was at Niagara, will show this :—

“I am glad that everything goes on so well at the Falls ; for, among other reasons, it enables me to be patient with my work here, and also to bear with patience the delays neces-

sary where many are interested. Both Mr. Eidlitz and Mr. Dorsheimer have written me that they were unable to be here to meet me to-day, as we had agreed. Eidlitz is to come the last of the week, and Mr. D. on Sunday. In the mean time I have enough to busy myself about. I feel that even in the event of my not undertaking the work it will not have been entirely lost time, as I am thinking over a good many things which I would have slept over, had not an occasion called them up. I regret much not being able to be at the Falls to complete the work there before hot weather. But I don't think it would be well to growl much at my luck. I am pleased that Tom is doing well. Remember me to him, and ask him to write and tell me how the brown mare's legs and feet are. Also, he must be sure not to let the horses go too long without having their feet looked to and shoes placed."

In another note at this time he says, "I am quite as anxious to be in N. F. as you are to have me, and the time lost in questioning and

doubt is very perplexing ; but I suppose we must look at it as a good thing. I have been trying some experiments in throwing up large figures in my room from small drawings, and they work pretty well. Will write soon and often, and like to hear from you."

This letter was sent off without either date or signature. He rarely dated his letters, but usually affixed his signature.

Mr. Hunt was, perhaps, more than most artists impatient of the ordinary incompetent criticism, and being by reason of his temperament an ardent hater for cause, naturally disliked a class of talking or writing people who, he felt, misunderstood and misrepresented him. His enmity was notably excited by the kind of simplicity that marched up to a picture painted to be seen at a distance of ten feet, and, putting its nose against the canvas, prated of brush marks and roughness and the lack of finish. I remember hearing Mr. Hunt and Mr. Joseph Jefferson compare opinions upon the effect of looking at pictures from wrong distances. They

quite agreed that it was necessary to modify one's representations to suit the distance of the actor from the audience; that good acting in a small auditorium might not be effective in a larger room.

Mr. Hunt was a believer in solid masculine work. He had been a painter long enough to appreciate, in his own productions, the worth of time in mellowing the tone and smoothing the surface of paintings in oil. No complaint was ever heard of a want of finish or smoothness in the painting called *The Prodigal Son*, recently on exhibition at the Art Museum. It appears, indeed, more "finished" or smooth than many a Holbein or a Ribera; yet, two years after it was painted, in 1853, its surface was so coarse and rough that the texture of the sheep-skin on the back of the smaller figure could not be distinguished from the flesh painting except by its color. Mr. Hunt recognized a certain crudeness and roughness as valuable qualities in fresh work, and did not choose to be forced into a way of painting that he

did not approve. Rembrandt painted so roughly in his larger pictures, that his patrons complained bitterly; but we hear little now of his lack of finish, although his paintings have not yet become smooth. None of Mr. Hunt's work approaches, in roughness of surface, the loaded lights of the so-called Night Watch, or the picture in the Museum Van der Hoop called *La fiancée juive*. Allston's pictures gave great satisfaction when first painted, because they appeared like the work of the old masters. To-day they look faded and lacking in masculine qualities.

Mr. Hunt disliked also a set of admirers who were pleased to praise his early work at the expense of his present, and who spoke of his latest pictures as crude and hurried in execution. I could see, or thought I could see, that, averaging his work, he was painting, on the whole, better and better every year. I once remarked to him that I thought he had never painted so well as now, and asked him to tell me frankly his own opinion about it. He said, "I think I am painting

now better than at any period of my life. I should certainly be very much discouraged if I thought that, with all my trying, I had made no progress for twenty years. Of this I am sure: the things that I did many years ago with difficulty look very easy to me at the present time."

The charge of hasty execution is nearly always unmeaning. The value or beauty of an artistic production depends upon its quality, and not upon the way in which it is created. Corot and Millet painted in a way that make their things look, to the uninitiated, both hurried and sketchy; but they worked patiently over their pictures, and purposely covered up the appearance of hard labor. This gives an attractive quality to their work not otherwise attainable. We all know how long it took these great artists to reach the position due them, owing to the slow process of bringing the public up to the point of realizing that what they called unfinished, appeared finished to the painters, and was at least, just what the masters intended it to be,



and not something hastily begun and hastily tossed aside from some artistic whim.

Many artists work slowly, and some very rapidly. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to take as many as three hundred commissions in a single year.

Since Mr. Hunt's death, but never before within my knowledge, he has been spoken of as lacking in originality, and his earlier paintings, done under the supervision of Couture or Millet, or soon after leaving their ateliers, are instanced in supporting this view. But to dispose of this accusation we have only to look at the things done after he had emancipated himself from his pupillary surroundings. I think one finds in his later work a rather aggressive and striking originality both in conception and style. Certainly one would never speak of any of the old masters as lacking in originality because their early works resembled those of their teachers. Such fidelity to teaching is creditable to the pupil. The only thing that gives very early work any value whatever is its close resemblance to that of some artist of reputation.

In the spring of 1877, Mr. Hunt was especially disturbed by an article published in one of the newspapers of New York. It purported to be a notice of the spring exhibition of the Academy of that city, but a chief object of the communication was, apparently, to give vent to some splenetic views concerning Mr. Hunt and his pupils and friends in Boston. As Mr. Hunt had no pictures on exhibition in the New York Academy at this time, one might have supposed it difficult to introduce him and his local surroundings into such an article; but the writer was equal to the occasion. Mr. Duveneek had some pictures there, and these paintings, the writer went on to say, were "not needed here so much as in Boston;" but they were particularly needed in the latter place "to break up the stagnation that follows monopoly in the art world no less inexorably than it does in the market. We are fortunately free, now, from the one-man power that until a little while ago in Boston had ground down all the young women artists', and many of

the young men artists', bones to a pale unanimity, and which, if it had not been checked in time, would have swamped art in our sister city in monotony and mannerism. Mr. Duveneck's appearance in Boston fluttered the dove-cotes there to some purpose, and nothing that we know of in the recent history of our art world seems to me as interesting as the cordial enthusiasm his pictures excited among the younger members of the Art Club, — an enthusiasm which took the practical shape of an invitation to the artist to come and settle in Boston, where, it was hoped, he might give efficient help in the opposition that was making itself felt to certain arrogant and dogmatic claims beginning to be unbearable. Mr. Duveneck did not accept the invitation, but his pictures worked powerfully in the desired direction, and greatly strengthened the hands of the rising school. In Boston the presence of a strong man was needed to temper, not to destroy, the rule of one artist, who, immensely more through social and personal influences, —

among them a streaming eloquence of dogmatic assertion, headstrong opinions, and blustering scorn of all opposition, — immensely more through such influences than through his art, had imposed his theories and his practice on a crowd of blind adorers. Of course some good has come of this autocratic rule. It has not enlarged people; that can only be done by teaching them to think for themselves. It has not made them love art; that can only be done by showing them art in its various manifestations; and Boston people have been crammed, in these later years, with the belief that there is no art but French art, and that Couture and Mr. Wm. Hunt are its prophets. . . . No man in Boston, with any strength of his own, could, however, long endure this state of things. Those who could escape, fled to Europe or New York; those who could not escape made the best of it; and we can imagine their delight when, at a certain exhibition of the Art Club, they saw their deliverance dawn in Mr. Duveneck's pictures."

This article Mr. Hunt regarded as a malicious as well as an ignorant representation of his position in Boston, and felt that, in justice to his pupils and friends, and to the status of art here, some correcting statement should be made. He therefore wrote and sent the following reply, which was refused publication. It was addressed to the writer of the criticism. "I am not surprised," writes Mr. Hunt, "at your disgust at the character which you describe; but when one considers that it is your own manufacture, the disgust turns naturally towards the machine which incubates such a production. You present the picture of a being so weak and stupid that he cannot even teach people to 'think for themselves,' and one who has not taught any one to love art; 'for that can only be done by showing them art in its various manifestations.' This weak creature at the same time holds 'autocratic rule' over a city of three hundred thousand inhabitants for years, grinds everybody to pieces, and those who can escape fly to

Europe, — or to New York! To cap the climax, a deliverer arrives, who, by the bye, had been invited by me to share my studio; and in another moment, if it had not been checked in time, this ‘one-man power’ would have ‘swamped art in our sister city in monotony and mannerism.’

“Now, your motive in all this is to create animosity between me and other artists; but you will be unsuccessful. The sister city, over which I am described as holding such autocratic rule, has always been the first to accept most cordially fresh examples of art. Boston was the first to recognize Millet, Corot, Daubigny, and of our own non-resident artists, Inness, Lafarge, Vedder, Duveneck, and others.

“You tell us that Boston people have been crammed with French art, and that Couture and William Hunt are its prophets. Now it may surprise the reader to learn that you have written the history of my teachings and creed without even asking me an opinion, or being present at any lesson of

my class; furthermore, to learn that I have never undertaken to teach M. Couture's method, or any other method, and have endeavored, as all my scholars will say, to develop in each one his individual manner. I would as soon think of teaching a method of writing poetry.

"The words 'French art,' which you put in my mouth, I do not remember ever to have used in my class; for they convey no meaning to the art student further than being suggestive of a class of skilfully painted pictures imported into New York, and sold to amateurs and dealers all over the country. The term is used here generally by what are called 'dealers' assistants,' who drum up purchasers, rope in friends, and pocket commissions.

"Among modern painters I admire Hogarth, Géricault, Constable, Turner, Delacroix, Ingres, Flandrin, Corot, Millet, and others. I have pointed these artists out to my scholars as admirable; and I shall not forget that Géricault, one of the greatest of

modern French painters (mind you, not a stickler for French art), went over to England, and wrote to Delacroix to come over, saying that the English had at that time the best painters.

“And when we see the admiration of the French for Bonnington, of Troyon for Constable, artists of each nation studying and admiring the works of the other; and in visiting the studios of some of the best men in England to-day find on their walls sketches by Daubigny, Diaz, Corot, and Millet, it shows that those who have succeeded in art have always loved and respected one another's work.

“Please to remark that these are not the names whose monograms decorate the corners of pictures generally peddled about this country, or talked of as belonging to ‘French art,’ or any other art. They are the names of individuals, and as different from one another as are Shakespeare, Goethe, Molière, and Browning; and, moreover, they are names that would never have survived if



contemporaneous art criticism could have killed them.

“The idea that fine art was ever confined to a school, or a people, is too idiotic to speak of. To accuse me of upholding such a sentiment is as silly in you as it would be for me to publish that you believe that art criticism can only be written with a quill of the great bald-headed American eagle.”

Since Mr. Hunt's death the same critic again writes: “Mr. Hunt was essentially the apostle of a school, and cried aloud in the desert of our American art culture the name of a master. He worshipped the name of the late Thomas Couture, and he taught hundreds of his countrymen to worship it.” It would be interesting to learn how this writer obtained his singular knowledge of Mr. Hunt's opinions and teachings. I never heard Mr. Hunt mention the name of Couture but once, and on that occasion he humorously alluded to the circumstance of some young American artists being in Couture's studio, for the purpose of learning his

method. "Having got the proper method," said Mr. Hunt, "they can come right home and go to painting."

As an example of Mr. Hunt's manner of teaching by words, the following outlines of a lecture are interesting. It is a very simple lesson, but not too simple to be of interest.

"To make a copy of an object, and to imitate, if you will, as closely as possible, is an elementary process in learning to paint or draw. Therefore, make the most earnest endeavor, as you do when you first try to copy the letters and words in learning to write. But in order to *say* anything in art, to express as well as may be the impression or emotion which you have felt when you have seen something that has impressed you, or when your imagination has made a combination, and you desire to express this picture to another,—in order to do this, you will find not only that it is not necessary to say all that you can discover in the objects necessary to give the impression, but it will tax your ingenuity and patience to the utmost

to keep the different objects needed to make your statement or picture each in its relative position to the other, and to the point you desire to make in your argument or representation.

“The manner of using all objects will necessarily differ in every new subject or statement; and you will find that to paint a plate, or a flower, or a drapery, is a very easy matter in comparison with making these objects sing the desired note in the harmony of a composition.

“To have something worth saying is a good deal; to be able to say it, is not given to every one. To be eloquent is rare; to have the power to move and convince all hearers requires something more than courage, conviction, and independence. The possibility of this power is inborn, and is developed only through intense love, earnestness, desire unlimited, and the sacrifice of everything to one purpose.

“You cannot be too plain or too direct. You must believe and you must affirm, and

let your qualifications and your doubts follow in the baggage train to look after the wounded; and when in your descriptions you speak of a leaden sky or a golden river, neither be surprised nor discouraged when the scientific realist, the expert, or the critic gravely informs you that even by the test of specific gravity your statement can be proved erroneous. Remember that weights and measures are as much his business as perception and feeling are yours.

“When a spectator, after looking at your work, remarks that he never saw this or that in nature, remember that this may be true; and, moreover, that if he had seen it, it might have said nothing to him. Listen rather to those who have expressed to you clearly something which they *have* seen, and which enables you to see something which you never before thought worth noticing. You may be sure of getting more satisfaction in showing what you have observed to a man like Sir Isaac Newton, who saw the apple fall, than you would from all the apple gath-

erers from the time of Adam down to the present.

“Why should we feel hurt by the complaints or criticisms of those whose opinions on art, were they for sale, we would not give a cent for? On general rules, should not their praise be discouraging? Let us suppose, now, that we have become capable of drawing and painting various familiar objects, — of rendering the idea of space in the sky, and the distance extending between objects as they recede from one another; that we have learned to give the idea of substance and weight to the objects which we have endeavored to copy, — let us suppose that we have arrived thus far, and can give the general characteristic appearance of these forms and distances. Now it remains to be seen how we are to use this power in the formation of pictures, for it is, thus far, but the power of writing and spelling and learning the definition of the words of a language, — a part, in fact, of the grammar and the dictionary; we have still to say something which will inter-

est mankind, and to do this we must dare to leave the province of literal imitation to the parrot and the monkey. We are now to *express*, with the little we have learned, the ideas and emotions in which the mind and perceptions and heart of the artist abound."

A young man learning to paint asked Mr. Hunt if he did not think it time that he exhibited something. "Oh, yes, yes," was the reply, "it's quite time you began to exhibit your pictures. You'll never think as much of them as you do now."

Mr. Hunt himself was rarely very eager to exhibit his own productions to the public. I remember that, being urged to send pictures to the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia, he said, "I don't know why I should take the time and trouble to go about and collect my pictures, and send them off at my own risk. I have nothing in my studio that I care to send. If those who own pictures of mine would send them, I should not object to it, but I don't care enough about the matter to waste time over it." In answer to

a letter begging him to exhibit some of his pictures on another occasion, in New York, he wrote :

“MY DEAR MR. —: I have not any picture at present which I care about sending to the exhibition. Exhibitions are generally, I find, anything but encouraging to production, and I believe the healthy habit of production will, in the end, do more for a man than all the praise or blame elicited from the public or the press.

“I wouldn't paint a picture for an exhibition with any more freedom than I would talk with any freedom in society or at a tea-party. I don't feel inclined to hang myself up, voluntarily, either as a lunatic or an idiot; one of which places being always awarded to one who chooses to think or act for himself. I have peculiar notions about painting, and although I never succeed in doing what I undertake, yet I go on, if I don't exhibit. I always feel like answering invitations to exhibit like invitations to

parties, — that I regret that a previous engagement will prevent, etc.”

This little anecdote of an occurrence at one of his last public exhibitions in his studio in Park Square Mr. Hunt told one evening with most hearty enjoyment. The exhibition was a large one; there were a good many oil-paintings beside a great number of charcoals, the latter reaching to the ceiling and covering one side of the great studio. A stranger was observed to look the things over earnestly, and finally to make a broad sweep of the eye over the collection as a whole. Then turning to his companion, he asked, “Is the man that did all these pictures here?”

“Yes,” said his friend; “that’s the artist, there,” pointing to Mr. Hunt.

“What! you don’t mean to say that old feller in the corner, there, did all these pictures?”

“Yes, that’s the artist.”

“Wal,” said the stranger, giving Mr. Hunt another good look, “he’s had time enough to do ’em in.”



Mr. Hunt was at this time about fifty-four years old, but looked nearly twenty years older. This aged appearance was due chiefly to his long gray beard, that made him resemble the portraits of Leonardo and Cellini taken when they were quite old men.

Mr. Hunt was very amusing about his growing old sight, for which he had permitted me to prescribe proper eye-glasses, that he bought at Thaxter's. One evening, proposing to read us a letter that he had received, he took from his pocket an unpleasantly common-looking pair of glasses, and, anticipating my inquiry, said, "These eye-glasses I bought in the street for twenty-five cents. They seem to be about as good as those you prescribed. The fact is those were a little too good. I broke the spring, and carried them to be mended. They were to be done the next day, which was a week ago, but I don't think I shall call for 'em. I might break 'em if I had 'em, and Thaxter will take good care of 'em." He then, as usual for some weeks at this period, hung

the eye-glasses on the end of his prominent nose, wrong side up, so that the spring lay over his mustache, and gravely began to read.

He carried at this time a cheap silver watch. It was "hermetically sealed," as he called it. You could, if you wished, put it in a tub of water over night. There could never be any necessity for opening it, as it was wound and its hands set by the stem. It made a noise in winding like a watchman's rattle, and if the stem were turned the wrong way it made just as much noise, and did the machinery no harm. He was constantly taking this remarkable watch out of his pocket, swinging it around by its chain, and winding it both ways as noisily as possible, remarking that it was "the most amusing watch he ever had; very companionable, too; worth more than its cost as a toy to play with."

Mr. Hunt was a most remarkable mimic. He mimicked anybody and everybody including even himself. On one occasion he showed

us how he mounted the platform to declaim his piece when in college. Having made his bow to the audience, he stood before it, dumb, until finally requested to resume his seat by the teacher. The fellows all thought it one of his best jokes, got up for their amusement; but the truth was, he was so frightened that he could not recall the first words of his piece.

Mimicking the negro manner and speech he said, "If er white man ever frow me out er balloon agin, an' *I ken ketch him*, I'll make him prove it."

One of this race, formerly in his employ and very cunning at begging, said, "Misser Hunt, have you got another pair er shoes *exactly* like them you got on? 'cause if you have I'd like to buy em."

## IV.

ON Mr. Hunt's return from Mexico, in the spring of 1875, we expected to see many sketches and paintings as souvenirs of his journey, but nothing of the kind was brought home. In their stead we found his studio resplendent with Mexican trappings, bric-a-brac, shawls, yellow draperies, a large collection of Mexican opals, and a pair of leather breeches. All these he showed and caressed with childish delight. Mexico was one of the most interesting countries in the world. There was nothing like it; he was going back another year to make a long stay. Presently he put on his leather breeches, and strode about the studio for our amusement.

His bringing no paintings or sketches of consequence home with him was due, probably, to the fact that the journey was made for rest and recreation after a hard winter's

work at portrait painting. There were, to be sure, at the late sale several charcoal sketches purporting to be Mexican subjects, but it is doubtful if they were correctly named. The brown picture that has been already mentioned as having been painted the next day after the artist had seen a Jules Dupré was catalogued at the sale as a view at West Newbury. Years ago, when first exhibited, Mr. Hunt had called it a view in Weston. Artists record impressions, and the public like to have them named. Sometimes such impressions are more or less accurate transcripts of scenes in nature from a chosen point, but a landscape painting is often merely the artist's impression of an effect, and bears no resemblance in composition to any one spot.

Mr. Hunt had a strong love for diamonds. During the years that we knew him he always wore a diamond ring on the little finger of his left hand. The stone was one of extraordinary brilliancy; and he told us that when he bought it, many years ago, in Paris, he

could toss it into a collection of a hundred fine diamonds, and readily pick it out again. He had tried in vain to match it since. One evening later he appeared with a second diamond ring on the little finger of the other hand. It was fine, but not so fine as the old one. He had found it in a jeweller's shop, and could not resist the desire to own it. Since he had got possession of this, however, he had seen one in New York that he believed might match his old one. He had discovered it on a man's finger, and it was not for sale, but he had a friend in New York who was going to see if it could not be bought for him.

Mr. Hunt was also, as I have remarked, an excellent man of business. At the time of the greatest depression in real estate, a house in Park Square was offered for sale by auction. Mr. Hunt talked over the purchase of this house a great deal, and with his usual earnestness. He was sure it would increase largely in value ; it was an entirely safe investment. He would like to occupy a part of it imme-

diately, himself. To our surprise, he then named the exact sum that he proposed to give for it, adding that if it went above this sum he should not buy. To our suggestion that it would be a pity to lose it rather than go a few hundred dollars higher, if necessary, he said, "I will not go one dollar higher. A man must have a limit, and wherever you put the limit there you must remain. You might as well not have a limit if you are going higher. I consider it a good purchase at my figures: it may be a good bargain at a higher price. I don't know about that." This astonishingly cool way of treating the matter, in the face of his enthusiasm over the location of the house, its desirability, and the probable low price it would fetch, was a revelation to us; but we were not surprised afterwards to learn that the house was sold at a few hundred dollars above the sum Mr. Hunt proposed to pay. He got some one to look after his interest at the sale, lest he might, under the impulse of the moment, go beyond his limit. On the Millets which he

sold, a few years since, his profits were, he told us, in the neighborhood of one hundred dollars on every dollar invested. "And," he remarked, "the Millets were sold below rather than above their market value." He once showed us an unusually fine specimen of Diaz that he bought twenty years before for two hundred francs. It would easily bring fifty times that amount now.

"Whenever," said Mr. Hunt one day, "in repainting a picture, there is a particular spot that you wish to save, paint it right out, or you will sacrifice the rest of the picture to it."

I have spoken of Mr. Hunt's having been invited to lecture in the Sunday afternoon course at Horticultural Hall, and his final decision not to accept the honor. He had already declined to deliver some lectures at Yale College, and afterwards a like request from Harvard College had not been complied with. As to the latter, he said, one evening, "Professor —— came round, at our club, and sat down by me and began to make himself



agreeable. I didn't mean he should get the better of me in that respect, so I made myself agreeable, too, just as agreeable as I could,—and you know, when I try, I can make myself pretty amusing; and I don't think he got much the start of me in that line. Well, presently, after we had both been so agreeable that nothing further could be expected in that way, he asked me to deliver some lectures at Harvard College. I didn't promise to do it, but I said I would think the matter over, and let him know. I *have* been thinking the matter over, and have pretty much concluded to ask him to permit such of the students as want instruction in art to come to me in my studio on certain evenings, when I will talk to them. I shall feel at home in my studio, and have plenty of pictures and drawings about me with which to illustrate my lectures. You see, I have my doubts whether they really want to learn anything about art at the college. Perhaps they only want me to come over there and lecture. If that's all they

want, I sha'n't go. If they really want to learn, — if anybody really wants to learn, — I'm ready to teach. I like to teach. So I think I will just invite the authorities to let the students hear the lectures in my studio. If they are in earnest, they will accept my proposal; but I don't expect it to be received very cordially. It isn't what they want."

The letter below is a draught of one that was sent in answer to the invitation from Yale College. The matter that follows, it was proposed, first, to embody also in the letter, but this was not done.

DEAR SIR, — In answer to your invitation to lecture on art before the Yale School of Fine Arts, I would say that my time is already more than taken up in trying to learn how to paint, and as I can get no information from lectures I do not believe I could give any. The world is full of people who lecture on art, and I will not interfere with them.

Yours truly,      W. M. HUNT.

“Neither poets nor artists can be manufactured ; much as ever they can be supported when they do exist.

“No man can teach me to produce good work in art except a producer of good work, and he brings his work with him as a thinker brings brains and a fighter brings fists.

“A talker may persuade himself that he knows everything. A doer persuades the world he knows something.

“When the world wants wealth and works, it will demand of the financier and the critic some tangible proof of their wisdom ; but paper and talk are easier handled, and will suffice for to-day.

“It is well to listen to lectures to save one’s self the trouble of knowing anything, but if one wants to know anything of art he would better use his eyes ; for until some of the talkers have produced paintings and sculpture which will appeal to the ears, they can teach very little through that medium. I have known a deaf painter, but not a blind one.

"If I am entitled to an opinion, it is through what I have done.

"Works, not words, can instruct.

"The only lessons that painters, or poets, or architects, or sculptors, have ever taught, or can ever teach, are in their works.

"When an artist leaves his work to amuse people, he loses not only his time, but their respect.

"The best thing about most lectures on art is that their effect is not lasting.

"Lectures are like hash, — not very nourishing, but will do when one is so young he knows no better, or so old he has no teeth. You can't expect a uniform."

The uniform refers to a story of Mr. Hunt's. A man ordered some hash at a restaurant. He presently found a soldier's button in it; and on remonstrating with the waiter the latter said, "What do you want? You can't expect a whole uniform in one plate of hash, can you?"

"The most interesting lecture I ever happened to hear was on language, when the

speaker dealt with the material he was describing.

“A man who wants to discover anything would better stand by Christopher Columbus on deck at night than listen to his lectures on the discovery of a new world.

“How are we going to make painters by lectures to men? We are going to make questioners and doubters and talkers. By painting and showing the painting of others we are to make painters. By working frankly from our convictions we are going to make them work from their convictions.

“Most of us have been so taught to doubt and question that we haven't time enough left in our life to express an opinion of our own. It is by having something to say, and not trying to say it in words, that one learns to paint.

“One capable artist, with his assistants employed as formerly, would produce more good workers than all the schools in the country, and with this difference: that works would be produced instead of theories and

advice and teachers. If good art is produced, take advantage of the fact, instead of inveigling hundreds into an occupation where not one in a thousand can make a living, unless he resort to talking, toadying, or speculation, all of which an artist can familiarize himself with when it becomes necessary, but which he is naturally averse to. If people are to be instructed or assisted by artists, artists must be employed in their legitimate occupation; an artist cannot live on compliments and conversation.

“If you want artists, respect art. If you want art, respect artists.

“It seems to me high time that something should be done to encourage producers. The country is being overrun with art teachers and lecturers, because we don't want doers, but talkers. When we really want art there will be a call for artists to paint, and producers will be respected, employed, and encouraged. The world seems to want machines to manufacture artists, poets, statesmen, and philosophers; but when these exist,

neither their work nor their opinion is wanted. One is invited cordially to join the gang and produce what he is not to produce, — works. If he is a musician, he is invited to play for the world to march in to supper.

“If Michael Angelo and Titian were living to-day, they would not be called upon to paint. They would be lectured to by the wise, and told that the Greek only could produce art. Were they even to lecture from Maine to Georgia, artists would not necessarily rise up in their wake. We don't want our hens to lay; if they do, we throw away their eggs, and bring all the hens in the country to sit on gravel stones, hoping to hatch out wonders. We are all taught to criticise and find fault with things instead of being made to comprehend and appreciate them. This also comes from talking instead of doing. It is only one who has done something who can see in an embryo the possibility of what it may grow to. Those who are taught from the past see only the past. They ignore the existence of the present.”

Of modern painters, Mr. Hunt was fondest of Millet; next to him he mentioned oftenest, I think, Eugène Delacroix; then Corot. He never quoted Couture. He liked Turner and Reynolds. Of the picture called the Slave Ship, he said, "I like it; it has breadth. A small man couldn't have painted it." Speaking of the Rimmer statue of Hamilton, one evening, he said, "People laugh at it a good deal; but it's not to be laughed at; there is noble feeling in it. No doubt it has faults enough; but you just go down and stand near it, directly in front, so that you can look up to it, and you'll find it impressive."

Once, in talking over the work of some of his lady students, I remarked that a certain painting by one of them I thought very creditable, on the whole, but that it lacked, in comparison with his work, just a certain quality that one might well suppose it would have. One could not expect great excellence in flesh tint, in color, and in composition, but the artist being a woman, and dressing well



herself, ought, one might fancy, to excel in graceful and stylish arrangement of the dresses of her figures, and paint drapery fairly well. "Yes," said Mr. Hunt, "one might think so; but the trouble is, she doesn't know what is under the dress that she paints. She didn't begin drawing from the nude figure, and doesn't know the anatomy of the human form well enough. Without this knowledge it is impossible to do draperies well and to give what you call style. Just hold up your arm a minute." I held up my arm bent at a right angle, as for a tailor to measure for the length of a coat sleeve. "Now," continued Mr. Hunt, "I will tell you every time before I touch your arm with my finger whether it is the flesh or the cloth of your coat that I shall touch. I know exactly where the arm itself is, notwithstanding the large folds in the sleeve." He then went on touching the arm, saying every time before the touch, "coat," "arm," "arm," "coat," correctly. "Well, then," I said, "there is no really fine drapery painted

in this country. I should think you would never see any that would entirely satisfy you." "That's true," he replied; it's very rare to find drapery satisfactorily painted until you get back to the old masters. They know how to do it."

Of the old painters he quoted most frequently, perhaps, Veronese; then Michael Angelo, Titian, and Velasquez.

Mr. Hunt felt that he was very strong in the artistic anatomy of the human figure. In early life he had been a hard student in Germany, and was a very correct and painstaking draughtsman. When at school in Düsseldorf he was noted for this special talent. Powell, the painter of the great picture at Washington illustrating the discovery of the source of the Mississippi, who visited Düsseldorf while Mr. Hunt was a student there, says that he displayed remarkable talent as a draughtsman. His studies from the nude and the antique were so perfect in drawing, and so impressed his teachers, that he was declared to be qualified to paint long

before he had been at the academy his full three years. Nothing of their kind, so far as *fine drawing* is concerned, with the possible exception of a work or two of Page, has ever been done in this country comparable with the Wardner portrait, the figure of the painter's mother, or the portrait of Mrs. Adams. Other things of the artist's are finer in color; but Mr. Hunt's greatest achievements lay not so notably in the direction of color as in his drawing, modelling, and in his noble style. He was especially satisfied with his ability to paint hands correctly and elegantly when he chose. Being remonstrated with, one evening, for exhibiting a figure in which the hands were in a half-finished state, he retorted, "Well, the picture belongs to me. I don't ask anybody to buy it. It's my picture, and I suppose I can exhibit it if I choose. You say the hand looks erysipelatous. It does. It looks as though it had a very bad ulcer on it; but nobody is obliged to look at it unless he chooses. Most people know by this time

whether I *can* paint a hand or not; whoever doubts it may look at my portraits and see."

I still maintained that, by virtue of his high position in his profession, he should feel bound to exhibit publicly nothing but his best work; that, like high officials, he should move with circumspection before the people. He rejoined pretty hotly that he thought it a rather serious matter if he couldn't do as he would with his own pictures. He got quite excited over the discussion, but in a few minutes it was over, and his next evening with us followed sooner than usual,—a compliment clearly intended to show us that the little disagreement had left nothing unpleasant behind it.

His subordination of his skill in drawing, for the purpose of giving prominence to some other artistic quality in his work, at times misled certain critics. Thus, of his smaller picture called *The Bathers*, when he brought us the photograph in the autumn of 1876, he remarked, "I don't pretend that the anatomy of this figure is precisely correct. In fact, I

know it is not. It's a little feminine; but I did it from memory, without a model, and was chiefly occupied with the pose. I *do* think the balancing idea is well expressed, and it is the fear of disturbing that which prevents my making any changes in the contour of the figure. I know that I could correct the anatomy, but if the pose were once lost I might never be able to get it again."

While impatient of what he called incompetent criticism, like most artists, he courted the sincere criticisms of friends. However adverse, such criticism rarely annoyed him. I remember a conversation like this over a small gray landscape:—

"You made pretty free with your ivory black in this picture, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did use ivory black pretty freely."

"It seems to me that the sky is a little noisy too: so much motion there would be likely to ruffle the surface of the water more."

"Yes, that's true! I could fix that all

right in a few minutes; but it's something like what I saw, and perhaps somebody may like it well enough to buy it as it is."

On one occasion he had invited us to his studio to see a full-length figure on which he was working. It was stylish, fine in color, and lifelike, but, at the first glance from the studio door, there appeared to be something amiss in the drawing of the back part of the head. Expressing his desire to know of anything that struck us unfavorably, he was told of the apparent defect, and said at once that it must be remedied. He then asked us to go again to the entrance of the studio, and, covering a portion of the head of the figure with his hand, showed us how the fault could be remedied; and the drawing was afterwards changed according to this indication.

I once said to Mr. Hunt, "I've discovered the secret of the great fascination in painting. Perhaps you'd like to be told what it is?"

"Well, yes," said Mr. Hunt, "If you've got the secret you may as well tell it to me."

"Then I'll tell you. Painting is an attractive and very respectable form of gambling. Everybody likes to gamble. When you put your brush to canvas you can never foretell the result. The effect may be much better than you expect; oftener it will be much worse, and never will be exactly what you anticipate. There is no certainty about it. What do you think of my discovery?"

"Well," said Mr. Hunt, after a moment's seriousness, "I *used* to think that the old fellows knew exactly the effects they were going to produce, but I'm not at all sure that they did. You may be right."

It is not known for what particular occasion the following memoranda were made:—

"A good deal of our so-called cultivation is like sand-papering the surface of the eye."

"The only real cultivation is that where the instinct is preserved in all its clearness, notwithstanding all that is added to it."

"The great secret is to add, and not to swap."

"The false tooth, the glass eye, are types

of the highest civilization and cultivation. Pedantry fills a tooth ; affectation and a glass eye are things known only in modern civilization, — in states of modern culture.”

“Intelligence is water-power ; wit is steam. Expand a drop of intelligence by the fire of enthusiasm and fervor of desire, and it multiplies its force by thousands.”

“There is more force in speed than in weight.”

While Mr. Hunt’s sensitive organization gave him a capacity for enjoyment unknown to differently constituted people, it gave him also, naturally, what might be termed an abnormal susceptibility for suffering from a class of slight or temporary annoyances, that, with most people, pass unnoticed.

His spacious studios never pleased him long, and he was disposed to find fault with them a great deal, in a humorous way. Once the noise of rats so disturbed him that he felt forced to seek new quarters. Then his numerous stoves gave him such trouble that he could not work. A slight leak in the



roof, on another occasion, had a similiar effect. Finally he built the large studio in Park Square, and, having moved into it, we heard no more of these troubles.

Doubtless, a great part of this sensitiveness was due to ill health. He rarely complained of feeling unwell, and spoke of his health with reluctance. Appearing tired, one evening, when we noticed it and asked him how he was, he said, "Oh, I don't know; if I should begin with my bad feelings, I should keep it up all the evening. What is it that Emerson says, — Beware how you unmuzzle the valetudinarian?"

One evening he said, "After all, I don't know but the barbarous tribes that kill off their old men are pretty wise. You know they put an old man in a tree, and then shake it. If he's strong enough to hold his place in the tree, they allow him to live another year; but if he falls to the ground, they kill him with clubs."

Probably his tenderness towards those who were ill, or not strong, and his sympathy for them, were quickened by his own sufferings.

One of our household had sent him some home-made chocolate drops, upon the receipt of which he forwarded them, with the following letter, to a friend and pupil who was ill: —

MY DEAR MISS —: I bring you some of Millet's drawings, by way of making you patient to stay indoors this blustering weather. I also add a little box which I found on my return to the studio.

The note is so pretty that I send it too, for I feel that had Mrs. — known you were ill she would have sent you the sugar-plums and the note. At any rate, to have received them is so grateful that I pass them along, as in the game of button, button.

Yours truly,                      W. M. HUNT.

In a letter from Weathersfield, Vermont, postmarked June 30, 1879, to his assistant, Mr. Carter, who had just left him, at the time when Mr. Hunt was supposed to be slowly regaining his health and strength, he says, —

"I imagined you arriving in Boston a little while after our tea, and yesterday at about the same hour safely at home in West-boro'. What a relief it must have been to you, and what a reward for your unbounded patience, and what a let up! Well, I mustn't be sentimental, but I will express my gratitude. Since you left I have endeavored to take your place in taking care of me. . . . I really do not want you to hurry back on my account. Do try to have a good time, so you may not lose your faith in the whole human race."

A few days earlier he had written to Mrs. Carter: "It must be dreadfully aggravating for you to have your husband penned up here so long; but I can tell you one thing: when he *does* get back (if that ever happens), what there is left of him will have gone through a fiery furnace of patience, and I will guarantee that the temper of the old Damascus blades was nothing in comparison.

"I really pity him and you too, but I am



Notwithstanding his weakness and lack of sleep, his generous impulse towards a brother artist led him to write as follows on August 16th : —

MY DEAR —: I should like to be in Boston and look over Tom Robinson's pictures with you, and enjoy the satisfaction of seeing something fine. I am sure Tom deserves the greatest credit for his pluck, perseverance, and capacity, and I am heartily grateful that he has been so successful.

He is a real man, and it does not surprise me to know that he has painted his real self. I am glad you wrote me about his pictures, as I was desirous to know about them. . . . When you see him just shake him by the hand for me.

The above was an unusually long letter for him at this time. Generally his letters were very short, but full of characteristic humor, with never a hint at illness or despondency.

"SHOALS."

DEAR C——: Weight yesterday afternoon,  
east wind, cool, thick woollen clothes and  
coat, and thick boots, *after tea*, . . . 145

This morning, rather warm and some  
changes of clothing, . . . . . 141

Three days ago, thin suit and warm  
weather, . . . . . 137

Weather and weight variable. If it  
grows as hot here as in Danielsonville  
I should weigh, . . . . . 000

Yours truly,      W. M. HUNT.

The great achievement of Mr. Hunt at Albany involved more labor than is generally supposed. There had been, during the summer preceding, a preparatory work in the studio at Boston of nearly five months. Mr. Hunt had returned from Niagara about the first of July, after accepting the commission for these paintings, and had set about the task at once. It was necessary that the separate figures and parts of figures should be studied, drawn, painted, and com-

bined to fit the great arched spaces where they were to go.

For *The Flight of Night* the heads of the horses, their legs and feet, were all freshly painted from life, although years before he had carefully modelled the horses in clay. *Anahita*, the Goddess, was again painted from life. *Sleep and the Child*, and the *Dusky Guide*, were also painted from life. For the other picture, the *Discoverer*, *Science*, *Hope*, and *Fortune*, were painted from life models. Parts of these figures were also drawn and colored as separate studies; as, for instance, the heads, hands, and arms.

Of the two compositions entire and of their separate parts, there were made at this time upwards of thirty careful charcoal drawings, and in pastel more than twelve. Seventeen oil-paintings, twelve inches by thirty, of the compositions complete, were also done. These were made chiefly to test the effects of proposed combinations or contrasts of color. In addition, there were two

large paintings, one of each subject, about six by eight feet, and two large pictures in oil, of Fortune, of about the same size.

Blocks of stone like that in the walls of the Assembly Chamber at Albany were sent him, that the effect of pigment upon them might be tested.

Meantime, in a room under the studio, paints were being ground and tints mixed and hermetically sealed in five-pint tin cans, to be in readiness for transportation to the scene of his great work. Why all this grinding and mixing was done in secret no one knows; but Mr. Hunt never made his appearance in this room until the grinder, who knew nothing of the destination of his products, had gone home for the day; then he went down and inspected the results with the greatest interest.

After all this painstaking preparation, it was found, on arriving before the great walls at Albany, that the space within the arch upon which the Flight of Night was to be put was not sufficiently high for the compo-



sition as it had been proportioned. It was necessary to lower the figure of the goddess, and to change the relative positions of the horses, so that they should be brought more together towards the centre of the panel. Some important changes were also made in the grouping of the figures in the Discoverer. The composition of this picture appears always to have been more tractable than that of the Flight of Night. There had been fewer and less radical changes made in it since it was first drawn. It has been generally supposed that this composition was purposely designed for the arch it now occupies; but this is not the case. There is still extant a charcoal of it drawn in the year 1857.

The Flight of Night had been first put on paper in 1847, ten years earlier. It had undergone many changes before these last at Albany, and long before it was ever supposed it would be anything more than an easel picture. The goddess was first drawn shielding her eyes from the coming light with

her raised arm. She was looking forward, was differently seated, and her chariot was winged.

The work at Albany being necessarily hurried was especially anxious and exhausting. The legislature was to meet at an appointed time, and the staging must come down on a certain day, whether the paintings were finished or not. It could not be known beforehand that just fifty-five days' labor would end the task. But it was known that the final and telling touches must be made by Christmas, and rectified, if necessary, on that day; after this, no additions or subtractions were possible. Whether the two large compositions could be satisfactorily put upon the walls within the prescribed time seemed a question; and it became still more a question when, after painting the first day, they found, on climbing up to their places the next morning, that their day's work had pretty nearly vanished into the texture of the stone. The faith and courage of Mr. Hunt's accomplished assistant were now in-

valuable; and later, during the progress of the work, his solemn promise that, if their effort proved a failure, he would himself paint out both pictures in a single night was greatly comforting to Mr. Hunt.

During these fifty-five fatiguing days the artist and his assistant were always up in the morning to catch the rising sun, so as to carry a fresh impression to the work upon the Flight of Night. Every evening they watched the waning daylight, and noted the effects of figures and objects against the setting sun as a study for the Discoverer.

Thus the fifty-five busy days passed rapidly by, and came to an end. The great work was accomplished. But, apart from the anxiety inseparable from an experiment of such magnitude, the physical strain of working on such spaces upon step-ladder and scaffolding told fearfully upon the artist.

During the intense excitement of the work, as it progressed, he was, indeed, unusually strong and buoyant in spirits;

and even after the return to Boston, for two or three weeks, under the lasting stimulus which his happily-finished task had given him, he was still light-hearted and cheerful; but the inevitable re-action came at last, and the nervous exhaustion had been so severe and prolonged that no recovery from it was possible.

















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